

PREJUDICE, INTELLIGENCE AND THE ABM

In his book, "The Craft of Intelligence", the late Allen Dulles, Director of the Central Intelligence Agency for nine years, wrote:

"I feel that there are important reasons for placing the responsibility for the preparation and coordination of our intelligence analyses with a centralized agency of government which has no responsibility for policy or for choosing among the weapons systems which will be developed for our defense. Quite naturally policymakers tend to become wedded to the policy for which they are responsible, and State and Defense employees are no exception to this very human tendency. They are likely to view with a jaundiced eye intelligence reports that might tend to challenge existing policy decisions or require a change in cherished estimates of the strength of the Soviets in any particular military field. The most serious occupational hazard we have in the intelligence

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field, the one that causes more mistakes than any foreign deception or intrigue, is prejudice."

What wise words these were. And how relevant they are today. For in the past two months we have seen an agency of the government with the responsibility for choosing a weapons system attempt to justify the choice it has made on the basis of "intelligence" regarding the strength of the Soviets in the military field. I have become convinced that the "intelligence" presented has been incomplete in some cases and inaccurate in others. It has been, in short, perverted by prejudice to the point where it is not objective intelligence at all but merely subjective opinion.

I am talking about the ABM. I am talking about the plan to spend an amount which, according to some estimates, could

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reach \$13 billion. I am talking about the proposal to construct a defensive system which many of the most eminent scientists in this country say will provide only the illusion of defense and many others say will provoke a new phase in the expensive and dangerous nuclear arms race. I am talking about the claim of the Defense Department to construct a system to meet a Soviet threat the Department itself has defined.

As the debate in the country about the ABM has developed, it has become clear that Secretary Laird and others in the Defense Department have based their case for the Safeguard system on the Soviet threat in general and on the Soviet intercontinental missile they call the SS-9 in particular. The Secretary has invoked intelligence regarding the reasons

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for continued Soviet deployment of the SS-9, future total Soviet ICBM strength, the status of the development of multiple warheads by the Soviet Union, the relationship between U.S. and Soviet military expenditures, the development by the Soviets of a Fractional Orbit Bombardment System, future Soviet anti-submarine warfare capabilities, the greater relative vulnerability of the U.S. population to missile attack, the Soviet reaction to the Safeguard announcement and future Chinese missile capability.

I, too, have made a study of the views of the intelligence community. I, too, have access to authoritative intelligence reports on which to base assertions about the Soviet threat. I will do so now, emphasizing that I have the evidence to support my statements.

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Turning first to the question of the SS-9, Secretary Laird, testifying before the Foreign Relations Subcommittee on International Organization and Disarmament Affairs, said that the fact that the SS-9 can carry a warhead of up to 25 megatons shows "they are going for our missiles and they are going for a first-strike capability." He added: "There is no question about that."¹ He then explained that "if they (the Soviets) were going to go just at our cities and not try to knock out our retaliatory capability. . . they would not require weapons which have such large megatonnage."²

Deputy Secretary Packard told the Subcommittee that there

1. Testimony of Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird, March 21, 1969, Strategic and Foreign Policy Implications of the ABM Systems, Hearing before the Subcommittee on International Organization and Disarmament Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, 91st Cong., 2nd Sess., (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1969, pg. 196.

2. Ibid., pg. 203.

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had been a "feeling that the SS-9 was going to level off at a number somewhere below 200" but that when he looked at "the latest intelligence information, there had been a recent increase in the number of SS-9's³ deployed."

Yet according to the intelligence available to the appropriate committees of the Senate, the facts regarding the SS-9 are these. We have known about tests of the SS-9, and about deployment of the SS-9, for several years; in the past two years the rate of deployment of these missiles has decreased and not increased; the number of SS-9 launchers discovered since November 1968 represents an increase of less than three percent of the total number of SS-9's; there has

3. Testimony of Deputy Secretary of Defense David Packard, March 26, 1969, Strategic and Foreign Policy Implications of ABM Systems, pg. 284.

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been no change in the size of the warhead capacity during the time we have known about the SS-9; last year's National Intelligence Estimate did not predict that SS-9 deployment would "level off at a number somewhere below 200" but predicted a range of deployment which accords with the situation today; and while the SS-9 could be used to attack hardened targets it could also be used as a vehicle for multiple warheads or special purpose weapons. In sum, my intelligence sources do not agree that there is "no question" that the SS-9 is being deployed in order to develop a first-strike capability. I gather that the United States Intelligence Board, our top intelligence body, has never made such a finding.

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On the question of future total Soviet ICBM strength, in a speech before the Florida Unipress Association in Panama City on April 25, Secretary Laird said:

"Based on the Soviet Union's level of activity in recent years -- including test, development and production -- they have the capability of achieving by the 1974-1975 time frame a force of 2500 ICBM's in hard silos compared to the 1054 programmed by the United States."⁴

Yet according to the intelligence available to us, the Soviets will have between 1100 and 1500 ICBM launchers at most in the 1970's -- not 2500 in hard silos -- and if they stress quality instead of quantity the figure will be closer to the lower limit of this range.

4. Address before Florida Unipress Association, Panama City, Florida, April 25, 1969.

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On the subject of multiple warheads, Secretary Laird told the Subcommittee: "The Soviet Union is moving forward with multiple warheads, and so are we."⁵ Mr. Packard testified that "evidence was available that they (the Soviets) have done some testing in putting three warheads in a MIRV kind of an arrangement on the SS-9 and we cannot be sure whether they are independently guided or targeted or not."⁶

Yet according to the intelligence available to us, while we have tested and are about to deploy MIRV's, the Soviets have not yet even tested them. They have tested only MRV's -- that is, clustered warheads which do not have the more sophisticated capability ^{of} ~~for~~ being independently guided to

5. Secretary of Defense Laird, March 21, 1969, Strategic and Foreign Policy Implications of ABM Systems, pg. 199.

6. Deputy Secretary of Defense Packard, March 26, 1969, Strategic and Foreign Policy Implications of ABM Systems, pg. 284.

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separate targets -- and have not deployed them.

As for the relationship between Soviet and U.S. defense expenditures, Secretary Laird told the Subcommittee:

"The last budget of the Soviet Union clearly showed that they were outspending us in the area of strategic offensive forces by better than 3 to 2. It showed that in the field of strategic defensive forces they were outspending us on a dollar conversion basis, better than 1 to 3 . . . when we combine the costs of strategic offensive and defensive weapons systems, and convert that to an effort ratio based upon the gross national product of the two countries, we find that their effort ratio is almost four times the effort ratio of the United States in this field."

Yet according to the intelligence available to us, Soviet spending for offensive and defensive weapons showed no increase

7. Secretary of Defense Laird, March 21, 1969, Strategic and Foreign Policy Implications of ABM Systems, pg. 216.

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in the period 1965 through 1969, compared to the period 1960 through 1964, although expenditures doubled for ICBM's. While Soviet military and space expenditures were higher in the period 1965 through 1969 than in the preceding five years -- due, among other things, to rising outlays for research and development and the increase in general purpose forces ~~due~~ because of ~~the~~ the Sino-Soviet border confrontation -- Soviet military and space spending was about 75% of U.S. military and space spending in the period 1965 through 1969 compared to 90% in the previous five-year period.

The Soviets "are also working hard on a fractional orbit bombardment system designed to reduce the warning time of our bombers. . . ,"⁸ Secretary Laird told the Subcommittee. On

8. Ibid., pg. 173.

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the same subject, Deputy Secretary Packard said: "This system has been tested, but we do not yet know the extent of its deployment . . . they have run tests but we do not know whether they have actually deployed this as an operational weapons system."⁹

Yet according to the intelligence available to us, the Soviets have not deployed a Fractional Orbit Bombardment System, although they have tested such a system.

With regard to Soviet anti-submarine capabilities, Secretary Laird told the Subcommittee: "I do not believe that we will be in a position where the Polaris would be sufficient in that time period, after 1972, to be relied upon as the deterrent force of the United States."¹⁰

9. Deputy Secretary of Defense Packard, March 26, 1969, Strategic and Foreign Policy Implications of ABM Systems, pg. 278.

10. Secretary of Defense Laird, March 21, 1969, Strategic and Foreign Policy Implications of ABM Systems, pg. 195.

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Yet according to the intelligence available to us, the Soviets now have only a limited capability to locate Polaris submarines in the open ocean and probably will not have a more extensive capability for several years. Furthermore, it is the view of the intelligence sources available to us that the Soviet submarine-launched ballistic missile force is not designed for first-strike, but for second-strike, purposes.

Commenting on the relative vulnerability of the United States to missile attack, Secretary Laird told the Subcommittee that "U.S. population and industry are far more concentrated than are the population and industry of the Soviet Union."¹¹

Yet according to the intelligence available to us, while total destruction of the 25 largest cities in the United States

11. Ibid., pg. 175.

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could result in over twice as many fatalities as the destruction of the 25 largest cities in the Soviet Union, and while the United States urban population represents a larger proportion of total population than does that of the Soviet Union, the population of the Soviet Union is more concentrated in several other respects. Urban areas in that country cover a smaller area than our sprawling urban complexes and there is no city in the United States which compares in its political and economic significance to the rest of the country to Moscow. Furthermore, the industrial capacity of the Soviet Union is more vulnerable than that of the United States because industry is more heavily concentrated in larger cities in the Soviet Union than is the case in the United States. And, incidentally, China's industrial base is

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smaller and more concentrated than that of either the United States or the Soviet Union which makes it even more vulnerable to attack.

With regard to Soviet reactions to the Safeguard announcement, Secretary Laird told the Subcommittee:

"The public Soviet reaction to President Nixon's announcement of a week ago is encouraging, however. The Soviet press indicates that its Government correctly views the modified ABM as a purely defensive weapon."¹²

Yet according to the intelligence available to us, Soviet media have responded to the Safeguard announcement with expressions ranging from mild disapproval to hostility. And the military press in the Soviet Union has cited the decision as evidence that the United States has no interest in reducing

12. Ibid., pg. 180.

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tensions or following a peaceful policy but wishes, on the contrary, to exacerbate the arms race.

Finally, with respect to future Chinese missile capability, Secretary Laird told the Subcommittee:

"Our intelligence community is unanimous in its belief that the Red Chinese do possess the capability to have a force of ICBM's operational by 1975 and could have it initially operational in the late 1972 period. We believe, on the best information available to us -- and we have very good information in this area -- that the Chinese will fire a test ICBM within the next 18 months."¹³

Yet according to the intelligence available to us, the earliest that the Chinese could have a single operational ICBM will be late 1972, assuming that flight testing begins in 1969.

13. Ibid., pg. 181.

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Thus, the Chinese will have at most 10 to 25 missiles by 1975, assuming again the earliest possible initial operational date. ~~Thus,~~ ^{therefore} the force that could be operational in the late 1972 period would be one missile.

"Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear -- not absence of fear," Mark Twain has said. We have much to fear in this age of nuclear weapons and ideological antipathies. Why should we add to our fears by inventing threats that do not exist? To do so, it seems to me, goes beyond the carelessness of prejudice and verges on the irresponsible. For the result could be that we will be mastered by fear, and if this happens we will have lost not only our courage but also our reason.

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